

Duxbury Clipper

Wednesday, January 13, 1999

Early Shipyards

(Here are some reminiscences of shipbuilding in Duxbury, written by Capt. John Bradford in 1891 and arranged in practically their present form by his daughter, Ellen Bradford Stebbins in April, 1893.)

The first vessel built at the first shipyard established in Duxbury at the foot of Captain's Hill in the year 1720 by Thomas Prince, was a sloop constructed mostly of wild cherry.

The second shipyard was owned by Israel Sylvester of Blue Fish River.

The third by Benjamin Freeman at Harden Hill, a short distance north from the Nook and near the extreme southern part of town.

Perez owned the fourth yard, location not known.

Samuel Winsor, the first of the name in Duxbury and Samuel Drew together carried on the fifth yard, on the shore of the nook westward of Captain's Hill. Samuel Winsor had previously, about 1745-50, built several small vessels on Clark's Island.

The sixth yard was established by Isaac Drew at the west side of the Nook.

John Oldham had a yard at Duck Hill, in the northern part of the town, not far from the Marshfield line, where now is mostly salt meadow, and the creeks are nearly filled with coarse sedge.

There was still another shipyard carried on by Capt. Samuel Delano below the mouth of the Blue Fish River, on the west side.

These yards had nearly all been abandoned before 1830, and were succeeded by the following, of which the writer has personal recollection.

At the extreme southern part of the town, Captain's Hill and the mouth of the Jones River in Kingston, and not far from the residence of Harrison Loring, Mr. James Soule had a shipyard, where he built what was then considered good sized vessels, but which would now be called small. He gave up the business before 1840, I think.